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WOMAN SUFFRAGE

UNNATURAL AND INEXPEDIENT.

VIEWS OF

REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM.
PRENTISS CUMMINGS.
JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.
PROF. W. W. GOODWIN.
RICHARD H. DANA.
REV. J. P. BODFISH,
Chancellor Cathedral of the Holy Cross.

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To the Honorable Senate and the House of Representatives:—

SOME of those who do not believe in woman suffrage, wishing to have their views presented before the Committee on Woman Suffrage in a manner comporting with the importance of the question and the vast interests involved, arranged to be represented by several distinguished gentlemen, and Mr. Richard H. Dana undertook to conduct the proceedings before the Committee in their behalf.

At the opening of the first hearing on the subject, the undersigned stated to the Committee that Mr. Dana had been called to New York on business and could not be present the next day, Friday, which had been assigned for the remonstrants, and requested that some future day, agreeable to the Committee, might be assigned for hearing Mr. Dana and others. Some members of the Committee expressed in a decided way their unwillingness to grant the request, and then the Committee, without taking any action upon it, proceeded with the hearing. The undersigned waited until the close of the hearing, when the Committee, following the course indicated at the outset by some of its members, emphatically refused the request which had been made, adjourned to the next day, Friday, and announced that the remonstrants would then be heard. It was distinctly stated to the Committee that it would be impossible properly to present the remonstrants' case on Friday. None of the Committee suggested any other time for hearing these remonstrants, and on Friday the hearing was closed. The remonstrants, in whose behalf the request was made, felt that such discourtesy indicated no desire on the part of the Committee to hear both sides of the question, and decided to present their arguments directly to the Legislature.

E. N. HILL.

REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM'S ARGUMENT.

THIS is a subject to be considered judicially; not with sentiment, fancy, wholesale assertions, still less with impassioned prejudice, or abuse, but with serious argument. It has been said that all the argument is on the side of the advocates of this reform. We take the liberty of doubting that. To us it seems the very opposite of the fact. They of the other side may possibly excel in power of appeal, in emotion, in feeling, in eloquent assumption, in sway over the imagination, the susceptibilities of the heart; but *judgment* is all against them. This is a grave, social question, and it cannot be answered by abstract generalities. No experience throws light on the problem. Our forefathers would be very much surprised at the interpretations the suffragists put upon their innocent words, "people," and "persons;" nor is the issue of experiments in sparsely peopled territories, like Wyoming, any criterion for States like Massachusetts, or for great cities, like Boston, New York, Chicago, or Philadelphia.

Some time ago I put the question respecting female suffrage to an active, energetic, intelligent, earnest man, a lawyer, and he answered at once that no one should take part in government who was not ready to defend, by force, if necessary, the institutions of the country. Women could not be counted on; therefore women should not vote. *That argument has never been met;* for it is no reply to mention the Amazons of antiquity, about whom, besides, we know nothing. It has been said that a certain proportion of men, — the invalid and disabled, — are drafted for the *hospital*, and that such work might be done by the drafted women. By *all* the women? What becomes, then, of the assertion that women can serve in the army? And what shall we do with the feeble men? Or are the hospitals to be large enough for both? Admitting that some women can bear arms, can

it be reasonably affirmed that the sex would supply half of a modern army? Could the government depend on fifty regiments, on ten, on five, in such an emergency as our late war presented?

Then consider the *cruelty to woman* which this new movement presages. Here is a point seldom touched on. I do not refer particularly to the multitude who are overworked and overweighted already by social or charitable duties, but to the great majority who are busy in refining the community in various ways, as artists, teachers, writers, musicians. The exemption of such from civil cares is indeed a boon. An English lady at Hombourg spoke with envy of American women, whose lot seemed to her so desirable. So far as she could discover, they were a privileged class. She was unable to see their limitations. In her view these were advantages, inasmuch as they made woman's opportunity by so much the larger, her exemption from toil so much more complete, her chance for development so much more extensive. Here was the leisure, the ease, the unlimited scope for the education of her talents, the encouragement to exercise every faculty she possessed. Men were her friends, not her tyrants or her patrons. They were at her service, to protect and care for her, not her masters to domineer over her. If she had no family to care for, no household to superintend, no social requirements to satisfy, she was perfectly free. She could follow her own leading, cultivate her own taste, assert her own prerogative. All usages were in her favor, and if all laws were not, they fell immediately into disuse, and were counted as relics of old barbarism. They may stand on the pages of the statute-book, but have no place in the minds of the people, who do not know of their existence even, and are indignant at being supposed to accept them as exponents of their own convictions. In America a woman is mistress of her property, can pursue any calling for which her talents qualify her, can attain to any position within her reach, and yet not be held responsible by the best people. She may lecture, preach, go upon the stage, practice medicine, plead before the courts, transact business,

hold real estate, make speeches in public, conduct debates in convention; in a word, do whatever she chooses within the lines of virtue. It is hard to discover the legal disabilities under which she suffers in contrast with men. And all the time she is courted, flattered, and looked up to, waited on, followed, as the higher inspiration of the race, in a way that no man would venture to proscribe.

Such was the belief of the English lady, and it was, in the main, just; certainly, as compared with English or European usage, the condition of women in America is enviable indeed, and every day is becoming more desirable, more influential. One advantage she possesses, in being released from the responsibilities of government, that is not commonly considered. From her position outside, she is able to survey, with an impartial eye, the movements of her generation. She is freed from the prejudices of partisanship. She can be broad, liberal, wise. No party lines need circumscribe or narrow her. She is not tethered to a political stump. Her nose is not held down to a grindstone. She can be independent without bolting.

Truly, the reasoning of the women suffragists is somewhat defective. For instance, — a few women paint; therefore *all* women must *vote*. A few women write; therefore all women must *vote*. A few women excel in business; therefore all women must *vote*. A few women have shown ability in commanding a ship, or a squadron, or a party; therefore all women must *vote*. What is become of the syllogism?

Before this great revolution is proposed, women should have the preparatory training in affairs out of which is born sober expectation, knowledge of what can be done, moderation of hope, solid practical judgment. One step at a time! Let us not begin at the end, or take for granted that the conclusion will trammel up the conditions.

January 31, 1886.

LETTER OF PRENTISS CUMMINGS, ESQ.

THE following is an extract from a letter of Prentiss Cummings, Esq., who had expected to be present at the hearing before the Committee on Woman Suffrage.

R. H. DANA, ESQ.: DEAR SIR, — Since I was unable to fulfill my agreement to take part in the recent hearing before the Committee on Woman Suffrage, I have been requested to set forth my views in writing for such use as counsel for the remonstrants might see fit to make of them. My engagements are such that I cannot undertake an elaborate statement; but I have decided convictions on that subject, and am willing to state informally by letter some of my reasons for those convictions.

An extension of the franchise to women would in Massachusetts more than double the number of its voters by adding thereto a class hitherto untried in politics. No man can foresee the consequences of such a step, yet, if once taken, it could hardly be retraced short of revolution; and it is reasonable to ask the question whether we are in any such strait as would justify a step so hazardous. A state of facts can be imagined which might justify it, — for example, if a decided majority of women wished to vote, and would feel a permanent sense of wrong if the right were denied them, or if the existing government were so corrupt, unjust, and intolerable, that as a last resort some desperate action must be taken for the common safety. It is no light thing that is asked for by the petitioners. Nothing short of some such grave exigency, or a demand from women as a whole of the right to vote, would warrant the risk attendant upon such an extension of the franchise.

No such state of facts exists. The women who wish to

vote are confessedly in a small minority. Women, as a rule, have no taste for public life, know little and care less about political questions, and feel that their labors and responsibilities now are as great as they can bear. The disinclination of the women of Massachusetts to take an active part in public matters is shown by the smallness of the number who vote for school committee; yet if there is any public matter in which women take a lively interest it is the public schools. The form in which the suffrage question has been brought before the legislature for several years past has been by a Municipal Suffrage Bill, so called; but not even the women who appear to advocate it claim that they take any personal interest in ordinary municipal questions, or have personal knowledge respecting them, such as the laying out and repair of highways, the building of sewers and water mains, or the government of the fire department. Such subjects in their practical form are peculiarly uninteresting not only to the average woman, but to the exceptional woman. I can see no reason to believe that more than a mere handful of women would vote on municipal questions if they had a chance, nor that that handful would bring to such questions an interest and intelligence which would result in any public benefit. The granting of political power to mere "stay-at-homes," or to blind followers of interested leaders, would be adding a new danger to our system of government. Both classes are too large in our voting population now.

When it is considered that the franchise, if extended to any women must be extended to them as a class, and that women as a class do not desire it, and have no taste for the duties involved in it, it would seem clearly to be the duty of the prudent legislator to vote against such extension. But it is sometimes claimed that women ought to wish to vote, that if the duty was imposed on them they would learn to take an interest in public affairs, and that woman's advent in politics would purify the political atmosphere, and be of great public benefit. This argument, that women should be forced into public life for the public good, is commonly based upon the assumption that women are better than men. I have never

heard it claimed that women as a rule are wiser than men, or more capable of dealing with public questions.

It is idle to discuss the question which of the sexes is the better. Both sexes have their peculiar virtues and failings; but I have never seen reason to believe that their moral natures are essentially different. Women, perhaps, are more innocent than men, — a fact logically accounted for by the difference in their manner of life, since the life of women is domestic, while men in their daily encounter with the world must become more or less familiar with its wickedness. It may fairly be questioned whether women might not lose this distinction of superior innocence in proportion as their manner of life and that of men became more nearly identical.

But so long as the family relation continues, and indeed as long as the human race continues, women and men must lead very different lives. The community is made up of families, and the family relation is the very foundation of human happiness as well as of public and private virtue. Advocates of woman suffrage disclaim any intention to destroy its existence or lessen its sacredness; yet the very condition of its existence and its worth requires that the mother, and therefore the majority of the sex, should pass a large part of life in the nursery, and in household cares. The life thus led is not imposed by the legislature, but by the Creator who made women women, and legislation cannot make them otherwise. The same power which imposed the burden has beneficently so made the majority of women that they find their highest happiness in that very life. The family relation also imposes its burdens upon men, but in a different way. He fights the battles of the family with the world at large, while she guards the home, and is the centre and source of its comfort and happiness. Her position is in no sense inferior to his either in importance or dignity. It is simply different; but that difference in the nature of things gives men a training for public and political duties that women cannot have. A man's duties, narrowing as they commonly are, are still akin to the practical questions upon which voters act. The tariff, coinage, the relations of capital and labor, and kindred matters,

are all practical questions in his business; and if legislation leads to war, he must encounter its hardships and dangers. He therefore is forced to take an interest in public questions, and naturally and inevitably becomes, as a general rule, the member of the family best qualified for political duties. These are simply facts, for which no human power is to blame, and which it is folly to ignore.

I wish to treat the advocates of woman suffrage with entire respect. Some of them are people of high character and ability; and some of the ladies among them are better qualified for the suffrage than some men. But special legislation to enable these exceptional ladies to vote is not practical, and indeed is not asked for. What is asked for is general legislation, applicable to the whole female sex, and contrary to the wishes of a majority of that sex; and that, it seems to me, is more than the few petitioners can reasonably ask, and more than the community can afford to grant.

LETTER FROM JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

February 11, 1886.

For the sake of men and women, we ought to ask the legislature to refuse the woman suffrage motion. Women deceive themselves in thinking that they can cure the evils of society by the ballot. The evils are spiritual and social: the ballot is only intellectual and political. All men's political issues are based on compromise. Political movements, parties, aims, are not, and cannot be, ideal or ultimate. The only ultimate ideal in society, as it is to-day, is the infallible "Right" and "Wrong" of good women. Their souls are at the judgment, when men can only use their minds.

To compel women to vote would be to reduce the whole human race to the secondary or intellectual level of the male half. The uncompromising spiritual sight and sense of the female half is the reservoir of morality and equity.

To compel women to vote is to excite the brutal in men, and to engender disregard for law. Women cannot enforce an ideal equity, when they have enacted it. The physical weakness of woman is her strength when it appeals to the spirit of man; but let it attempt to control or obstruct his physical or intellectual movement, he will push it aside or trample on it.

Ideal statutes openly disregarded is barbarism and anarchy, — the rule of the stronger appetite.

It would be no more deplorable to see an angel harnessed to a machine than to see a woman voting politically, giving up her divine intuition for a vulgar material compromise. It is not fair to let women make laws they cannot enforce. They could set the world by the ears, and leave the men to fight it out.

Political excitements will injure their health, and interfere with their family duties. Natural law makes them weaker than men: they ought not to assume an equal strength, for the outcome of failure is inevitable.

Woman suffrage would be the constitutional degradation of women; it would be an appeal to the coarser strength of men; and I profoundly believe that it would result in social disorder and disrespect of law.

Very truly yours,

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

A LETTER FROM PROFESSOR GOODWIN, OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

It seems to me incredible that any one who appreciates the increasing gravity of the problem which municipal government in this country presents, can propose at this time to extend municipal suffrage to all the women of the Commonwealth.

When the wisest minds are so sorely perplexed by the horde of evils which ignorance and irresponsibility have already brought upon almost all our large cities, when the power of the state has to be invoked to save these cities from their own governments, it is little less than wanton recklessness to propose to more than double the number of voters, with the certainty of increasing largely the amount of irresponsible ignorance in the electorate, and with no hope of even balancing this by any addition of political wisdom. The evil which is now so deeply felt, caused by the unwillingness of many of our best and wisest citizens to take part in politics, especially in city politics, would be increased tenfold if suffrage were extended to women. Even if I were disposed to favor this scheme, I should be strongly deterred by seeing that the great majority of the intelligent women of my acquaintance, whose votes would bring us an accession of political wisdom, would accept political duties only on compulsion. No one can believe that the same repugnance to politics would extend to the less intelligent women of the State.

Indeed, it seems to be acknowledged that the only reason for this attempt to introduce woman suffrage just at this most dangerous point, where the warnings of experience are so plain, is the accident that here an entrance can be effected, it is supposed, without the tedious process of amending the Constitution of the State. We cannot doubt, I think, that we can depend on the wisdom of our legislature to see the motive of this attack, and also to save us from the danger which it threatens.

W. W. Goodwin.

LETTER FROM R. H. DANA.

BEFORE entering upon the discussion of this difficult question, it seems worth while to survey the ground.

When this country was first settled, our forefathers had a pretty full opportunity to establish any form of local government they pleased, and that opportunity was renewed after the war of the Revolution. The latter was a period of able discussion of constitutional questions, and no time was more fruitful of wise results, yet they decided, without any hesitation, in favor of a form of government based on the votes of men. To this country, established upon that form of government, thousands of people have come, have acquired fortunes, raised families, and taken their part in the establishment of the laws that were to govern them and their children, male and female. Male representation has been in fact the basis of our social compact, and any change in this basis is so fundamental that the parties urging that change have upon them a very grave burden of proof. It is for them to show the need of the change, and whether the change they propose will meet the needs.

Now, how have they sustained this burden of proof?

At the hearing before the Legislative Committee on the 28th of January, 1886, there were three main points developed: —

The claim of an absolute right of women to vote; the comparison of their cause with that of universal suffrage, and of the right of freedmen to vote; and, lastly, a petition signed by some ten thousand persons, and the statement that they would be satisfied to wait until a hundred thousand women had agreed to ask for woman suffrage.

As to the absolute right of women to vote.

That there is no legal or constitutional right has been clearly settled by the Supreme Court of the United States

and the Supreme Judicial Court of this Commonwealth. All the cases and reasons are found in Robinson's Case, 131 Mass. 376. But doubtless it is not only the legal right, but it is some natural right to which they refer. Now there is nothing more vague in all metaphysics than what constitutes a natural right. Whatever, exactly, a natural right may be, a great many of our *so-called* natural rights it is safer and better that we should not maintain. Every one in a certain sense may have the right, the natural right, to use his time as pleases him, but for the public good we are not allowed to open our shops or carry on our business on Sunday. Every one has a natural right to use his real estate as he wishes, but in cities we cannot build wooden houses, and in many other respects our so-called natural rights are restricted for the public good. It is always a question of expediency and of the balance of advantages or disadvantages to the many or to the few; the practical value of the right, the need of its exercise, the benefit to be gained, and the evils to follow. So from the mere assertion that we have a natural right to do an act, it does not follow that it is wise or prudent to exercise that right. Yet those who would assume the great burden of proof in urging a charge to women's suffrage rest this part of their case on repeating the bare statement of an abstract right.

One of the arguments for universal suffrage, and for the suffrage of the freedmen, with which the petitioners compare their cause, was the argument that can be summed up in the famous phrase, "the consent of the governed."

The immediate answer that has been suggested is that women are virtually represented. It is, however, stated in return that women are not virtually represented, and because as we are reminded Parliament claimed virtually to represent the colonies; the slave-owner claimed virtually to represent the negro; and one celebrated writer goes so far as to say that a man in an adjoining county might as well say that he virtually represented him, as for him to say that men virtually represented the women.

Now the question of universal suffrage, and the right

thereto, cannot be treated as a logical proposition of only one syllogism. It is the result of close reasoning, in which there are a great many conflicting arguments; and on the whole it was decided in favor of universal suffrage, or nearly universal suffrage for men, and that because no one class of men was so closely connected with any other class that in fairness the latter could virtually represent the former. And because the argument of virtual representation has been misapplied in some cases, it does not by any means follow that it cannot be properly used in a case in which it does apply.

The interests of Parliament in England were very different from the interests of our colonies; and the interests of the inhabitant of one county are absolutely opposed to the interests of an inhabitant of another county; *e. g.* in laying out roads or spending money in public improvements: while the interests of a father and daughter, son and mother, husband and wife, brother and sister, are more closely united than any other interests imaginable. If we wish a new street laid out, it is for the benefit of "our" house; if we wish "our" street better lighted, it is for the benefit of us and our family. It is for a man's family that he works, labors, saves, strives, and deprives himself. It is for the family that he wishes the prosperity of himself and the nation, and for which mainly he wishes for his right to vote.

Virtual representation, much closer than between a voter and his representative, exists between men and women, and to compare the condition of a separate and distinct class of persons in the same or different countries to persons of the same class connected by the closest ties of blood, home, and affection, would serve as an illustration of unsound logic which can itself be illustrated by nothing more misleading.

It hardly seems, then, that the burden of proof is sustained by trying to carry to an extreme the principle of universal suffrage which is applied with good results and sound reasoning to men of different classes and diverse interests, but not even then without much hesitation and over many weighty objections. It would be like saying that because in cold weather we lighted the coal and wood in our furnaces and fire-

places we must, as a logical conclusion, proceed to ignite all the combustible material in and about our houses.

How was the burden of proof supported by the petitions? Out of a population of seventeen or eighteen hundred thousand, a petition with some ten thousand names was handed to the Legislature.

Every one at all experienced in public affairs knows what little value can be placed upon public petitions, and not a few of us are aware of the urgency with which the petitions in favor of woman suffrage in particular have been presented to us, and how hard it has been in many instances to refuse to sign them.

Now in making any fundamental change among any body of persons, as, for instance, in the organization of a corporation, or in the Constitution of the United States or that of a state, it requires a two thirds' or three quarters' vote, or a vote of three quarters of the states, as the case may be, to carry such a change, and in the case of introducing woman suffrage, changing so essentially our whole social compact, it does not seem as if the burden of proof could be sustained by offering to wait until they can obtain the assent of one hundred thousand women to the change, when there are in Massachusetts over a half million of women of voting age. Instead of obtaining two thirds or three quarters, they expect us to be satisfied by their showing that one in five of those to be affected desire the change.

One cannot pretend to solve absolutely so difficult a problem as the results that would follow from the introduction of woman suffrage, but I would like to make a few suggestions on some points which the arguments of the petitioners, either at the late hearing or at former hearings, do not seem to have touched in such a way as to sustain their burden of proof.

Society itself is based upon the family, and the family has grown, or naturally proceeds, from the dependence of the wife and children upon the husband and father. The marriage relation itself comes from the need of protection. The best writers upon general jurisprudence acknowledge this, and, as a part of the system, there has grown up a division of labor

between men and women. The household duties naturally attract the women, while the men are more fitted for and called upon to do the harder work of maintaining and supporting the family. Just as in watch-making, those who are most able to do the delicate and intricate work confine themselves to that department, and those with less delicate fingers who are able to do the harder work — the melting and beating the metals — confine themselves to that. So by a process of natural selection, depending largely upon motherhood, women have selected the household duties, the care and education of the children. Upon them depends the making the house bright and interesting, and having the boys as well as the girls grow up under the better and nobler influences of the mother. The trust is enormous: the mothers are responsible for a whole succeeding generation.

The husband even who digs and shovels is better fitted to understand the needs of a public road in the town meeting than the wife or mother who stays at home; and so on in every stage of life on the average — exceptional cases being put aside — the man is better fitted to attend to the business affairs of public life than is the woman of the same grade, and after all, public affairs are business affairs extended to the body politic.

There has often been discussion as to whether the differences between men and women were natural or educational. They are undoubtedly both. Children in the nursery, with the same parents, and under the same influences, very soon show a difference of sex. Children brought up together play tag. The girls scream, the boys are quiet. Again the differences of education are not wholly arbitrary or conventional. They depend upon the natural differences, and upon the fact that women, as a class, have looked and will look forward to the domestic and household duties. Why is not this division of labor on the whole the wisest and best?

One of the most fascinating ideas, and which captivates almost any one, is the suggestion that women will purify politics. In this the petitioners have again the burden of proof to sustain, and we should suggest whether the higher and

nobler qualities of woman, as a rule, fit her to appreciate the business relations of men in such a way as to enable her to understand all the bearings of affairs, which knowledge is absolutely necessary in order to be perfectly honest in business relations.

Women in politics history shows us have not had an enviable reputation. Almost every king who had a notoriously bad reign has been influenced for evil by women. The bribery cases in England have developed a great deal of dishonesty among women otherwise high minded. The very inexperience of women may lead them into many serious mistakes, which will implicate them in wrong though their ulterior motive be good. In answer to this it has been suggested that women may be educated, that they may learn the affairs of men, and that being interested in politics will be of itself an education. Then comes the question, — is woman capable of this extra work?

Knowing as we do that the whole physical and moral welfare of the succeeding generation depends upon the women of to-day, we should be very careful before we lay upon them any burden which they are not able to bear. Ah, but it is answered by those who assume to prove their case, the depositing of a ballot in a box twice a year can be no burden. But then it was just argued that women should educate themselves to understand the affairs of men, and this education requires a great deal of work. It is not mere book learning, but can be got only by experience. Round this point there has been much dodging. The need of business education of women is conceded at one time and ignored at another. At one time a scheme involving immense expenditure of time and work and change of occupation is proposed, and again it is described as dropping a ballot twice a year.

Again women are excitable, and politics are extremely exciting. The women of the South kept their bitterness of feeling much longer than the men. There is the long campaign in which even men have lost their tempers, business partnerships have been dissolved, and clergymen have been obliged to separate from their congregations from differences in pol-

itics. If women are to vote as their husbands and brothers do, the mere depositing of their ballot in the box would be but doubling the vote, and would create no material change in the final result. If they differ from their husbands or their brothers, the excitement would be intense. To vote effectively, they must organize whether they are to vote as a mass independently of the men, or whether they wish to join themselves to some party or faction of men. Those who organized and worked for the independent movement in the last campaign are well aware how much labor there is even in getting a body of men who are used to voting, to vote in unison without even being obliged to form an independent party. It requires public meetings and private persuadings, the circulation of literature and the creating of enthusiasm, all of which take a great deal more time and effort than is usually supposed. And among women it would have to be the women who did this work, provided they differed from their husbands, fathers, brothers, or sons.

Now the American woman is noted for want of strength of nerves. In the life insurance expectation tables it appears that women die of those nervous diseases which come from nervous weakness, such as debility or nervous prostration, more than men; while the men die from nervous diseases caused by overwork in a much larger proportion than women; and, again, such nervous diseases among men are much more common in the cities of the North and East than in those of the South, and still more than in the country. All this shows that the nervous strength of women is but slight, while work and excitement tend to increase nervous diseases even among those who are naturally strong. At present 16.2 per cent. of children in this country die before reaching the age of one year; and between 40 and 50 per cent. of all the deaths of all persons in any one year are those of children dying under five years of age. A mother's duty is not confined to her babes alone, but she has a duty to her growing children, which should take much health and strength and time. We had better be careful and not burden the American mother with new duties. Those who have to sustain the burden of

proof in this matter point us to exceptional cases. A very large majority of the women over twenty-one years of age are married, and of the remainder many will become married. A large proportion of the balance have to keep house for their widowed fathers, their brothers, or their sons. There are some exceptions, but no general rule involving the whole community can be based on a few exceptions, and yet the argument founded on exceptional cases is constantly resorted to by the petitioners and their friends.

There are, no doubt, many women, as has been suggested, who are very capable of working in our churches and charities, and are able to give very much time and attention with good results. They are generally persons of means, who are able to hire servants, and therefore, taking the community together, are and must be exceptional cases, and besides they have exceptional ability. Moreover, their work is of the most important kind; there are not enough of these useful women, at present; we only wish that there were more; and we would do all we could to prevent their being further burdened and distracted from the good work which they now perform.

This question of the health of women and the perpetuity of the race is one almost always overlooked; but we must remember that in the close competition which is growing up between civilized nations at present, with the rapid interchange of commodities and cheap transportation, any change for the worse in the succeeding generation may put a country almost irreparably behind in the race of nations.

It is not presumed that very extreme results would follow. If they were extreme we should not be afraid, for there would be an immediate reaction. The greatest danger lies not in their being extreme, but in their being gradual and slow in their developments. Very much as if we should give up all our holidays, including Sundays. The deterioration of the race from overwork would be only gradual. It might hardly show its worst results in a single generation.

In reading through the arguments presented by the leaders in this movement I have been wholly unable to find any reasons why this change is needed. The number of laws on

conflicting interests of men and women as classes is small, as such interests are few. One writer for the cause of woman suffrage states some three or four laws which he thinks are unjust, not one of which exists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and as a last resort he uses the argument that the improvements in our laws have been caused by the fear of woman suffrage, and that in order to hold these improvements it is necessary that women should vote. I think he hardly proves his case. If there were no improvements in the laws, excepting improvements in the relations between men and women, and only to the advantage of women, then there might be some reason for his inference; but while the few needed improvements have taken place in those laws, hundreds of improvements have been made in the laws relating to the men themselves, and for the benefit of both men and women collectively.

The experience of Washington and Wyoming Territories has been frequently quoted as an argument to which there can be no answer; but with a little inquiry it is very clear that the results in those territories cannot be used as illustrations of what would happen if universal suffrage was introduced here. In Wyoming Territory they had in the census of 1880 6,637 females (including minors), the smallest number in any State or Territory, and 14,152 males, and in Washington Territory 29,000 females and 46,000 males. In the territories political feeling, as it exists in New England and in the populous states, is hardly known. They do not elect any governor or a president of the United States, and they have no voice whatever in national legislation. Their only affairs are local affairs, like the affairs of town, city, or county in this Commonwealth. The same candidate frequently appears in different years on opposite tickets, and still more frequently both parties unite on a common candidate. So what works fairly well there may not work so well in Massachusetts.

Some letters have been used with great effect, written by men of prominence in the territories; but I have learned they have usually been from persons who either have gained their positions or may have to gain their positions through

the female vote, and therefore have been interested in making the best of woman suffrage. The usual result seems to have been, and I get my information direct from Wyoming, that the women vote as their husbands do. They are usually disinclined to vote at all, and vote when they do mainly for the purpose of counteracting the woman vote of some other faction or party, and have often to be urged very strongly by husband or brother in order to do their political duty.

The objection of being disturbed by the men at the polls does not seem to be so great as some have imagined, but it is sometimes extremely disagreeable to meet "disreputable and loud-mouthed women" who very frequently make themselves disagreeable at the polls.

I have not seen among the petitioners' papers any accurate or careful statistics which have been gathered from these territories. The letters that have been used by the suffragists have been but carelessly written without quoting statistics, and I find from private sources that they are incorrect in many respects.

Tried, then, under the most favorable circumstances, what good has it done? What results has it accomplished? What results that would lead us to try the experiment in another community where political feeling runs more high, where women outnumber the men, and where the poor and ignorant classes are vastly more numerous?

In general, women's great work seems to be the influence she exerts. Her power to influence for good is very great. If she were to undertake to quell and conquer men by voting against them, it seems as if she would lose her greatest power for good. As in the fable of the Sun and the Wind, the gentle influence of the Sun persuaded the man to take off his coat, whereas the Wind the harder it blew only obliged him to wind his coat around him the tighter.

For example, one celebrated champion of the cause tells us the following stories: —

D'Aguesseau, the consummate Chancellor of France, to whose tomb pilgrims from afar have traveled, in the one important and turning-point of his life, when he was sent for

by Louis XIV. to Versailles, who demanded of him an unjust judgment against his conscience, was about departing from his house trembling and preparing to submit, when his wife laid her hand upon his shoulder, and said to him, "When you appear before the King, forget your wife, forget your children, forget everything but your duty and your God," and the counsel of that woman it was that saved that matchless judicial reputation among the treasures of mankind.

In the great case between Charles First and John Hampden, Judge Croke gave the opinion of the minority in favor of the liberty of the subject. He was. however, about to determine in favor of the crown. He was reproached for his baseness by his wife. Says Nugent: "This noble lady cast the shield of her feminine virtue before the honor of her husband to guard it from the assaults equally of interest and fear; and with that moral bravery, which is so often found the purest and brightest in her sex, she exhorted him to do his duty at any risk to himself, to her, or to their children; and she prevailed."

This seems to me to show how great was the power of women without a vote, and as an unromantic but practical fact it would indeed puzzle one to see how the wives could have increased their influence, or how they could have worked at all, if they had tried to work upon or oppose their husbands through the ballot.

The truth is the ballot is not needed. If granted, its results will doubtless not be so bad as some suppose, but simply and only because women will vote with their husbands, fathers, and sons, as they do in Wyoming. In our more exciting elections the results will be a strain on our over-burdened women, and if they were ever called upon to combine and work in antagonism to the men, which they must do if their vote is really needed, the evils of the conflict would strike at the very foundations of our social system.

Excerpt from a Sermon preached at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston, Sunday, February 21st, 1886, by Rev. J. P. Bodfish.

"Not that I would have woman step out of her sphere; the man is the natural protector, the father, the lawgiver, of his family; nor would I counsel wives to usurp the places of their husbands at the polls. I believe this to be one of the errors of modern times, to try to unsex woman, and take her from the high place she occupies, and drag her into the arena of public life. What has she to do there? We might as well try to drag down the angels to take part in the menial affairs of this world as to take woman from the high place she occupies in the family, where it is her privilege and duty to guide, to counsel, and to instruct, — to lead that family in the way of righteousness. It is but offering her a degradation; Almighty God never intended it. The charm, the influence of woman, is in that purity that comes from living in a sphere apart from us. God forbid that we should ever see the day that a man, a husband or a father, is to find his will opposed and thwarted at the polls by his daughter or his wife. Then farewell to that reverence which belongs to the character of woman.

"She puts herself on an equal footing with man when she steps down from that place where every one regards her with reverence, and becomes unsexed by striving to make laws which she cannot enforce, and taking upon herself duties for which she is altogether unfitted."

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